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Child day care locator now available online
Electronic payment for FIA child care providers now available

LANSING—At a news conference in Lansing today, representatives from four state agencies announced new options for parents and child care providers.

Officials said Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services (CIS) and e-Michigan combined forces to create a new child care locator service. Meanwhile, the Family Independence Agency (FIA) worked with Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) to give FIA child care providers the option of receiving their payments from the state via electronic funds transfer – otherwise known as “EFT” or “Direct Deposit.”

Parents seeking licensed child care providers and approved FIA child care vendors can access these new options by going to the FIA website—www.mfia.state.mi.us—and clicking on the “Today’s Child” icon. At the site parents can search for child care providers, find guidelines for finding quality child care and access other child care related information.

After opening the site through the “Today’s Child” icon, parents searching online for a child care spot can click on “Licensed Child Care In Your Neighborhood” to locate licensed child care centers, group homes and registered family homes by name, address or zip code search. Parents can review information such as hours of operation, age of children each center will care for, and licensed capacities.

“This is an example where agencies with separate jurisdictions worked together in the best interests of Michigan citizens,” said Stephanie Comai, director of e-Michigan. “Finding appropriate local child care is important to parents and this service makes that easier.”

Gov. John Engler established the e-Michigan Program Office in Executive Order 2000-6. It is responsible for leading statewide e-commerce initiatives to deliver improved state-of-the-art

electronic services. Working through e-Michigan, Consumer and Industry Services developed the child care locator function.

“Parents are our most important partners when it comes to ensuring quality child care in Michigan,” said CIS director Kathy Wilbur. “This greater and easier access to child day care data enables them to be even more effective advocates for their children.”

At the site parents can access other child day care information including general information on help with child care expenses through the FIA. FIA-eligible parents can download an application for FIA-funded child care services and links to information about selecting a child care provider.

The Family Independence Agency, which funds child care services for public assistance and low-income families, has started inviting its providers to enroll to receive payments electronically. FIA will begin making electronic payments using the Contract & Payment Express, an electronic payment system administered by Michigan Administrative Information Network (MAIN).

The system offers the option of electronic funds transfer of payments to child care providers who provide care for FIA-eligible children only. The FIA expects to offer its providers the option to submit invoices electronically in the near future.

“This new service meets a need for our providers and it is just plain good business sense,” said Family Independence Agency director Douglas E. Howard. “Many child care providers who care for FIA-funded children have requested electronic payment.”

At the site providers can also find links to general information and requirements to be a day care provider. The electronic payments are restricted to Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services licensed providers who care for children eligible for child day care payments.

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